

Weekly Newsletter



Friday, 20th November, 2015

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'Shameful' reporting - What a shame it is that Brentwood Gazette only told half the story in their recent report about schools issuing Penalty Notices for poor attendance, listing many Brentwood schools in their 'list of shame'. Had their report included schools' attendance figures, then it would have been evident that the issuing of Penalty Notices to the few parents, where children have not attended school regularly, gives a clear message that Holly Trees Primary School values education and so do the vast majority of parents, which results in our school attendance figures currently standing at 97.5%, well above the national average. We have achieved our improved attendance over the last few years by working with families, supporting needs, making learning enjoyable and raising the profile of the importance of children attending school. Issuing Penalty Notices is the last resort and not an action we carry out lightly. Because our children attend school more often, the children's learning has improved with last year's results for Early Years, KS1 and KS2 all exceeding national expectations. Thank you to everybody who sends their children into school regularly so that they can enjoy all of the learning we offer. Perhaps in the future the Brentwood Gazette will run a good news story about the excellent work carried out at Holly Trees.

Operation Christmas Child - Many thanks for all the shoeboxes that you have donated. We have sent 268 shoeboxes, which will go to children in Iraq.

Maths Club - There will be no Maths Club on Monday, 23rd November.

Collecting children – Please could you let the class teacher know if somebody different will be collecting your child after school. We are unable to send your child home with somebody else if we have not been notified.

School Journalists – On Friday, 6th November the school had its annual fireworks display. It was a complete sell out. It rained and rained and rained. Fireworks that is. Everyone enjoyed it. Jake Simmons of Y6 said 'the fireworks were spectacular, much better than last year'. The school raised over £5000 to be put towards the music room. A huge thank you to everyone involved. *By Edmund Bass*

Creative learning – I had the privilege to go into the Year 3 classrooms this week where the children were preparing clay and then using it to make moulds for Bronze Age arrowheads. The children were loving their learning and could explain in detail to me what they were doing and how it supported their studies.

Number bonds and times tables – Without children having the instant recall of numbers that add to 10, 20 and 100 and their times tables, their ability to carry out calculations quickly is impeded. Over the next few weeks, we will be putting a lot of effort into teaching and assessing children's abilities in these areas. It would be very helpful to your children if you could also support this with regular practice at home.

Reading Rangers – There will be a meeting on Monday, 7th December at 2:45 pm for anyone who wishes to help with reading in class.

Demonstration phonics session – Early Years parents are invited to a demonstration phonics session in Acorn Class on Wednesday, 9th December at 9:30 am.

National Assessments – The end of KS1 and KS2 assessments (SATs) have been changed this year, with expectations being much higher. KS2 SATs will all be carried out in the week beginning 9th May, 2016 whilst KS1 assessments will be throughout the month of May. No requests for leave in Year 2 or Year 6 will be considered in May. There is also a lot more emphasis on the neatness and formation of children's handwriting, in addition to the content of their writing. No child can be considered to be working at depth if

their handwriting is incorrectly formed, regardless of how creative the writing is. To support children with this, teachers will be setting handwriting homework for those who need it.

Magical Christmas Grotto – The Magical Christmas Grotto is coming to town! Come and see Mister B's Magic Show and visit Santa and receive a gift on Thursday, 3rd December, starting at 3:30 pm in the main hall. Tickets cost £4.50 per child and adults are free – please pay online by SIMS ~Agora. If your child is in a class above Year 1, perhaps you would consider a later time slot so that the younger children can see Santa first. The time slots can be seen on Agora.

EYFS Christmas singing – EYFS parents/carers are invited to join an informal Christmas sing-a-long with their children on 16th December from 2:30 pm. Hot drinks and mince pies will be served by Year 6 children for adults. I hope you can join us.

Flu immunisation – The NHS has only provided us with enough letters for one per child. We ask that parents who do not live together liaise to ensure that the forms represent both parents' views. Please ask the office if this causes difficulties

Attendance – 97% target - Congratulations to Beech, Elder, Elm, Hornbeam, Larch, Laurel, Maple, Mulberry, Spruce and Sycamore for having over 97% attendance since the start of the academic year (September). Because we are early in the school year, just one day's absence will mean that your child's attendance will only be 90% at the moment. Please make sure your child comes to school every day when he/she is well enough so that the most can be made of the learning on offer.

Menu - Week 1 of the new winter menu. Please see website for details.

Letters home

18th – Y2 visit to Essex Fire Museum arrangements

20th – Football match on 26.11.15 (home v St Mary's Primary)

Forthcoming dates

25th Nov – Y4 Anglo-Saxons day

3rd Dec – Santa's Grotto after school

7th Dec – Reading Rangers meeting at 2:45 pm.

9th Dec – Y1 dress rehearsal

9th Dec – Y6 – Christmas unwrapped

9th Dec – Demonstration phonics session for EY parents in Acorn at 9:30 am

11th Dec – Y1 play

14th Dec – Y1 play

14th Dec – Secret gift shop

16th Dec – Christmas dinner

16th Dec - EYFS Christmas sing-a-long

17th Dec – flu immunisation

17th Dec – carol singing

18th Dec – last day of school – children return on Tuesday, 5th January

Congratulations

Bronze Certificates went to Chloe Wheeler, Albert Crowther-Barnes, Missy Tiller, Michaela Angeles, Hannah Campbell, Arissa Malik, Joshua King, Ameya Kotian, Joseph Gamblin, Florence Connelly, Sadie Shilling and Theo Harvey.

Anderson Award went to Jamie Clough.